United Nations ST/AI/2011/7

Secretariat

28 June 2011

Administrative instruction

Rest and recuperation

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2009/4, and for the purpose of implementing section C, paragraphs 6 and 8, of General Assembly resolution 65/248, promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provisions

Purpose and definitions

1.1 Staff members required to work for extended periods at duty stations under hazardous, stressful and difficult conditions shall be granted regular periods of rest and recuperation under the terms of the present instruction, in order to protect their health and well-being and to ensure optimal work performance upon the resumption of their duties, while preserving the operational readiness of the Organization. Rest and recuperation is a means by which staff members and other eligible individuals can take regular authorized time off to leave the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes in order to be given a break from the dangerous, stressful, isolated working and living conditions under which they serve. Rest and recuperation is not an additional annual leave entitlement or financial compensation for the degree of hardship and insecurity of a duty station.

1.2 The following definitions apply for the purposes of the present instruction:

(a) *Duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes*: a duty station approved by the Office of Human Resources Management where staff members and other eligible individuals are authorized time off for rest and recuperation;

(b) *Rest and recuperation destination*: a location that is designated by the Organization to provide relief from an unstable and stressful environment and is conducive to rest;

(c) *Assignment*: a staff movement to a department, office or mission, with or without a change in duty station, for a limited period of time, during which the releasing department or office remains responsible for reabsorbing the staff member.

1.3 The authorized time off for rest and recuperation shall consist of five consecutive working days of authorized absence not charged to annual leave, plus

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actual travel time in each direction to and from the rest and recuperation destination. To ensure that the purpose set out in section 1.1 above is achieved, rest and recuperation shall be granted once the conditions set out in section 3 below have been met, in order to give staff members and other eligible individuals time off at regular intervals for rest and recuperation away from the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

Eligibility

1.4 The following individuals shall be eligible for rest and recuperation, provided they serve at duty stations approved for rest and recuperation purposes in accordance with section 2 below:

(a) Staff members who have been internationally recruited as determined by the Staff Rules and are appointed or are on travel status to the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes;

(b) Locally recruited staff members on travel status to the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes, provided the duty station is in a country other than the country of the parent duty station;

(c) Internationally recruited United Nations Volunteers appointed or on travel status to the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

1.5 The benefit of rest and recuperation does not extend to family members who are authorized to be present at duty stations approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

Section 2
Approval of duty stations for rest and recuperation purposes

2.1 Duty stations shall be approved for rest and recuperation by the Office of Human Resources Management following inter-agency consultations.

2.2 The approval of a duty station for rest and recuperation purposes shall be subject to periodic reviews. However, significant changes in the duty station environment may result in a determination between periodic reviews that the duty station should, or should no longer, be approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

2.3 Staff members and other eligible individuals shall be informed[1] of the duty stations approved for rest and recuperation purposes and of the effective date of that approval.

Effect of change in approval status

2.4 Staff members and other eligible individuals already present at a duty station newly approved for rest and recuperation purposes shall begin to accrue qualifying service from the effective date of the approval.

2.5 Should the approval of a duty station for rest and recuperation purposes be withdrawn, staff members and other eligible individuals having served the applicable period of qualifying service as at the effective date of the cessation may

[1] The list of duty stations approved for rest and recuperation purposes is published in an information circular, on the United Nations intranet and on the website of the Office of Human Resources Management: http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/salaries_allowances.

avail themselves of rest and recuperation within the following month, as provided in section 3.11 below. There shall be no prorating of the rest and recuperation benefit for any period of qualifying service shorter than the required period before the effective date of the cessation.

Section 3
Rest and recuperation conditions

Frequency

3.1 In order to achieve the purpose defined in section 1.1 above, staff members and other eligible individuals shall be authorized time off for rest and recuperation purposes after a period of qualifying service, as determined by the Office of Human Resources Management following inter-agency consultations so as to ensure harmonization across the United Nations common system. The annex to the present administrative instruction provides the generic framework for the granting of rest and recuperation and determination of its frequency.

3.2 Should security or severe hardship conditions improve or deteriorate at specific duty stations, the duration of the period of qualifying service may be adjusted by the Office of Human Resources Management after inter-agency consultations.

3.3 Rest and recuperation shall not be granted during the last month of service at a duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes, subject to section 3.11 (c) below.

Qualifying service

3.4 In order to be granted time off for rest and recuperation, service at a duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes must be uninterrupted. The occurrence of any of the following shall interrupt the qualifying service:

(a) Travel on official business outside the duty station, including travel for training purposes, if the eligible individual takes more than three days of annual or special leave in conjunction with official travel;

(b) Absence from the duty station on family leave, family visit travel, home leave, sick leave, special leave or annual leave for more than three working days, consecutive or otherwise.

3.5 The period of qualifying service shall run from the date of arrival of the staff member or other eligible individual at the duty station, or from the date of return to such a duty station after an interruption of qualifying service, or from the date of return to such a duty station after an absence on rest and recuperation.

3.6 When qualifying service has been interrupted, such service accrued before the interruption shall be forfeited and a new period shall begin upon the staff member's or other eligible individual's return to the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

3.7 Qualifying service shall be considered suspended when an eligible individual travels on official business outside the duty station, including travel for training purposes, to a duty station that is *not* approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

The period of qualifying service will resume from the date of return to the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

3.8 Qualifying service shall not be considered interrupted or suspended when:

(a) An eligible individual travels on official business outside the duty station, including travel for training purposes, to a duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes. In such a case, the qualifying service will continue to accrue while the individual is on official business;

(b) An eligible individual is transferred or reassigned from one duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes to another such duty station, without availing himself or herself of leave. In such a case, qualifying service accrued at the first duty station may be carried forward for the purpose of calculating the overall qualifying service for rest and recuperation purposes.

Duration of rest and recuperation absence from the duty station and combination with other types of authorized absence

3.9 Rest and recuperation is granted for five consecutive working days not charged to annual leave, in addition to the actual travel time to the designated rest and recuperation destination.

3.10 Subject to exigencies of service, rest and recuperation may be taken in conjunction with the following:

(a) Official holidays;

(b) Annual leave, except when such leave is taken for home leave or family visit travel as provided in section 3.11 (a) below. Where rest and recuperation is combined with annual leave, any illness occurring during the period of annual leave shall be subject to the provisions of staff rule 6.2 (e);

(c) Certified sick leave, subject to appropriate medical certification;

(d) Travel on official business, subject to the relevant staff rules:

(i) When staff members or other eligible individuals are permitted to combine rest and recuperation with travel on official business for their personal convenience, any additional costs above the normal entitlement in respect of the official business travel shall be borne by the individual;

(ii) The Organization shall not be responsible for any additional expenses or liabilities that may be incurred as a result of combining rest and recuperation with travel on official business, including any costs incurred in connection with delays, ticket changes, cancellations or fare increases.

3.11 Notwithstanding section 3.4 (b), rest and recuperation may not be combined with any of the following:

(a) Travel on home leave, family visit or return travel in relation to an education grant. Should such a combination occur after the approval or commencement of rest and recuperation, all days previously authorized as rest and recuperation shall be charged to annual leave;

(b) Maternity leave, paternity leave or uncertified sick leave. Should such a combination occur after the approval or commencement of rest and recuperation, all

days previously authorized as rest and recuperation shall be charged to annual leave or other leave, as appropriate;

(c) Travel on departure from the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes at the end of the staff member's or other eligible individual's appointment or assignment, unless he or she is transferred or reassigned to another duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes under section 2 above, and he or she does not take any leave.

Timing of rest and recuperation

3.12 In order to achieve its purpose, rest and recuperation must be taken within one month following the completion of the period of qualifying service and shall be forfeited if the staff member or other eligible individual elects not to take it within the prescribed period. Should exigencies of service, as determined by the head of office or chief of mission support at the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes, make it impossible for a staff member or other eligible individual to take rest and recuperation within that period, it may be taken during the following month on an exceptional basis. A new period of qualifying service shall begin upon the staff member's or other eligible individual's return to the duty station.

3.13 Rest and recuperation may not be taken in advance, carried forward from one qualifying period to the next or combined with subsequent rest and recuperation periods.

3.14 In view of the strict constraints on the times during which rest and recuperation may be taken, the head of office or chief of mission support at the duty station is required to plan the allocation of human resources accordingly. In particular, each head of office or chief of mission support shall make the arrangements necessary to ensure that:

(a) Eligible individuals are able to avail themselves, at the appropriate intervals, of their rest and recuperation benefit;

(b) The office is appropriately covered within existing resources during the period of the eligible individual's absence on rest and recuperation.

Rest and recuperation destinations

3.15 Rest and recuperation shall be taken outside the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

3.16 The Organization's designation of rest and recuperation destinations takes into consideration the availability of United Nations transportation. Eligible individuals may, however, travel to any location in accordance with sections 3.17 to 3.20.

Transportation

3.17 The Organization shall pay for the cost of travel in the lowest fare, economy class, by the cheapest and most direct route from the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes to the designated rest and recuperation destination. The Organization may purchase the ticket or provide a lump sum payment equivalent to the cost of the air ticket the Organization would have otherwise purchased had the staff member travelled to the designated rest and recuperation destination.

3.18 Whenever United Nations transportation is available, it will be provided free of charge and no payment for travel costs will apply. Should a staff member or other eligible individual choose for his or her own convenience to travel on a date when United Nations transportation is not available, no payment for travel costs will apply.

3.19 As provided in section 3.10 (d) above, rest and recuperation may be combined with travel on official business. Daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses are not, however, payable for continuation of travel on rest and recuperation.

3.20 Regardless of the destination chosen by the eligible individual to rest and recuperate, which may be different from the designated rest and recuperation destination, the Organization's financial responsibility shall be limited to the transportation costs as indicated in sections 3.17 and 3.18 above.

3.21 Notwithstanding section 3.18, if the Organization has designated two rest and recuperation destinations and a lump sum is provided in lieu of purchasing a ticket, the Organization will determine the lump sum amount applicable for each rest and recuperation destination. If the lump sum amounts vary, the Organization shall provide the lower of the two lump sum amounts. The higher of the two lump sum amounts shall only be payable upon the staff member's or other eligible individual's request; he or she must provide proof of travel to the rest and recuperation destination for which the higher lump sum is applicable.

3.22 In accordance with section 1.5, transportation or payment for travel costs shall not be provided to family members who are authorized to be present at duty stations approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

Relationship of rest and recuperation with other entitlements

3.23 Staff members and other eligible individuals shall retain their pay status while on rest and recuperation. Regardless of whether transport is provided by the United Nations, daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses are not payable while the eligible individual is on rest and recuperation.

3.24 Rest and recuperation does not affect the periodicity or accrual of travel or leave entitlements. However, travel on home leave, family visit or reverse education grant shall not be authorized until at least one month after the eligible individual's return from rest and recuperation.

3.25 No overtime or compensatory time off shall be granted to internationally recruited staff members at duty stations approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

Section 4
Final provisions

4.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

4.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/2010/9 is hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Angela **Kane**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

Annex

Rest and recuperation framework

Frequency	*Conditions*
4-6 weeks	A frequency in the range of 4-6 weeks is considered as exceptional and temporary in nature: • To be considered in non-family duty stations[a] with active conflict and where United Nations premises and/or staff are clearly targeted and work in very insecure conditions due to their association with or employment by the United Nations common system organizations. The United Nations country team discusses and agrees on the frequency to be recommended to the Field Group of the Human Resources Network.
6 weeks	All non-family duty stations[a] with one or more of the following extreme conditions: ◦ Active conflict ◦ Pandemics or other equivalent health-related emergencies ◦ Natural disaster or other similar extreme conditions
8 weeks	• All other non-family duty stations[a] • All non-capital duty stations[b] with a hardship classification of E
12 weeks	• All capital duty stations[b] with a hardship classification of E • All non-capital duty stations[b] with a hardship classification of D • First step of discontinuation of the rest and recuperation benefit for duty stations having previously had shorter frequencies, after conversion to family duty station status
16 weeks	• All capital duty stations[b] with a hardship classification of D

[a] The term "non-family duty station" is used when eligible dependants have been evacuated on a long-term basis or are not allowed to travel to the staff member's duty station for security reasons.

[b] Duty stations classified as D and E that do not have security restrictions but where the local conditions make them unsuitable for families owing to the lack of educational and health facilities and basic goods.